



NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

CHARACTER • COMPASSION • CONFIDENCE

College Essay Summer Assignment, Seniors not in AP, Summer 2021

I. Traditional College Essay

Colleges are looking for a traditional college essay, one that responds to the prompts on the Common App. This is a three-step process of Brainstorming, Reading and writing a Rough Draft. Each step will be graded on completion. **Steps 1, 2, and 3 are due the first day of class.**

Step I - Brainstorming

Answer the 17 Survey Questions on a Google Doc. They'll help you think of your experiences and begin to formulate stories that you can tell to show who you are, beyond the information provided on the application.

1 page minimum. 25 points

Survey Questions

1. The academic area in which I do best is...
2. My extra-curricular activities (within school) are...
3. My out-of-school activities are (this includes jobs)...
4. The type of college or university I am looking for is...
5. My friends describe me as...
6. My family describes me as...
7. The people I respect or admire the most are those who...
8. Qualities I don't like are...
9. My best quality is my ability to...
10. The area of my life I would like to improve is...
11. The place where I'm happiest is...
12. A big risk I once took was...
13. The worst mistake I ever made was...
14. The single event that had the greatest impact on my life, either positively or negatively, is...
15. My favorite literary, movie, television or other fictional character is...
16. If I could change one thing about the world (locally, regionally, nationally, globally) it would be...
17. If you could have dinner with one person, living or dead, historical or fictional or

otherwise, who would it be and why?

Step 2 - Reading

Read the linked articles on writing a good college essay. Write a paragraph about why and how ONE of them was helpful to you.

- [How to Write a College Essay](#)
- [Crafting an Unforgettable College Essay](#)
- [How to Conquer the Admissions Essay](#)

Read some of the sample student essays at [140 College Essay Examples](#). Choose one, and write a paragraph about why and how it was helpful to you.

2 complete paragraphs (one on an article, one for a student essay). 25 points

Step 3 - Rough Draft

Write a rough draft that responds to one of the Common Application Essay Prompts below.

2 pages minimum - 50 points

2021-2022 Common Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

- On-time completion of the minimums for steps 1-3 will receive a 100 point essay weighted grade.
- Rough drafts need not be perfect - they will be rewritten during the first month of school.
- Students who complete the College Essay class in June will automatically receive the 100 when school begins in August.

Optional COVID-19 Essay

COVID-19 has affected students in dramatically different ways. If you need it, the COVID-19 and natural disaster question in the Additional Information section is a place for you to describe the impact of these events.

The question is not intended to be an extra essay. There's also no need to describe how your school responded to these events. Your counselor will have an opportunity to discuss impacts like closures, online instruction, and grading policies. Instead, consider how these events may have impacted you, your family, and your learning environment.

- English teachers will be holding help sessions the week of August 16. In person and virtual options are both available.
- If you can't attend the help sessions, teachers are still available for help or to answer questions - email labbott@notredamehs.com if you have questions or would like assistance.